



**For Immediate Release**

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**Contact:** Jane Kalata

414 277-1139

jane\_kalata@namwolf.org

**Inclusion Initiative Partners Make Commitment to Spend  
More Than \$139 Million on MWBE Law Firms in 2012**

**Prudential General Counsel Susan Blount Recognized for Work with Inclusion Initiative**

**MILWAUKEE** – Members of the Inclusion Initiative – comprised of the law departments at 25 large corporations across the country – today announced a new goal of spending more than \$139 million this year on legal services provided by outside law firms owned by minorities and women (MWBE).

The Inclusion Initiative was launched in 2010 in response to a study commissioned by DuPont that found a significant decrease since the late 1980s in the number of successful minority owned law firms serving corporate America. In its initial year, it set a goal of spending at least \$30 million with MWBE law firms, a goal that was exceeded by more than \$10 million. Since then, the membership in the Initiative has grown to 25 corporations and resulted in a total spend of more than \$140 million with MWBE law firms.

The newest members of the Inclusion Initiative are AT&T, Coca Cola, and Pacific Gas & Electric, who join Accenture, Aetna, Allstate, American Airlines, Bank of America, Comcast, DuPont, Exelon, General Mills, GlaxoSmithKline, Google, JPMorgan Chase, Macy's, McDonald's, Microsoft, Prudential, Sempra Energy, Shell Oil Company, UPS, Verizon, Wal-Mart, and Xerox.

Recently, Susan Blount, Senior Vice President and General Counsel at Prudential, a co-founder and one of the original 11 members of the Inclusion Initiative, was honored by *Womens eNews* as "One of the 21 Leaders for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" for her pioneering work with the Inclusion Initiative and her overall dedication to increasing diversity and inclusiveness in the legal profession.

"While the Inclusion Initiative represents the collective commitment of an ever-expanding number of companies, it took the vision, drive and energy of Susan Blount and her staff of dedicated in-house lawyers at Prudential to bring together the critical mass of companies needed to get the Initiative off the ground," said Rick Richardson, Vice President and Associate



General Counsel of GlaxoSmithKline, an original member of the Initiative. “She was instrumental in helping to create the Inclusion Initiative, along with Tom Sager of DuPont.”

The award, presented at a gala dinner at the Jumeirah Essex House in New York City, recognized 21 people in three categories: Seven Who Catalyze Culture, Seven Who Engender Ballots and Seven Who Leverage Power. Blount was recognized as one of Seven Who Leverage Power, for being a Persuader for Diversity for her efforts in the Inclusion Initiative.

Blount is also a founding board member of the Center for Women in the Law at the University of Texas Law School, where she received her law degree. The center is devoted to improving the success of the entire spectrum of women in law, from first-year law students to the most experienced and accomplished attorneys.

“Inclusion is a basic social justice issue. Women are 50 percent of law school graduates but they have a higher rate of attrition and failure to make partner than their male counterparts. The situation is even more profound for African American and other minority attorneys,” said Blount. “Our work with minority- and women-owned law firms through the Inclusion Initiative gives us the power to change people’s lives and to make a permanent difference in our profession.”

Members of the Inclusion Initiative work closely with the National Association of Minority and Women Owned Law Firms (NAMWOLF) to identify best practices to maximize relationships with high quality minority- and women-owned law firms. “If the Inclusion Initiative companies meet the 2012 goal, we will have spent in excess of a quarter of a billion dollars on MWBE law firms in just three short years. This is a lofty goal. Achieving it will be something that should make each of our 25 member companies extremely proud,” added Richard Meade of Prudential.

The Inclusion Initiative is administered by NAMWOLF; however the law firms that Initiative companies use are not limited to NAMWOLF firms.

NAMWOLF is composed of more than 100 certified MWBE law firms in 33 states and is dedicated to increasing the utilization of diverse law firms by corporate and public entity legal departments. NAMWOLF board member Robin A. Wofford is Chair of the Inclusion Initiative Task Force and is assisted by NAMWOLF member Pariss Coleman.

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